I am not satisfied with the translation below done by Mr. AI of ChatGPT. His language skill is really excellent and usually he does super fine job entrusted. However, this particular work, he went a bit too far. I as the author of the Japanese original, feel like as if the writer were someone else. Mr. AI condensed and made it precise verry well but my taste is no longer there. But I still enjoy the irregularity of Mr. AI.

Some Unique Aspects of Shinto

Fostered in the Japanese History

February 18, 2024

When the Edo period ended and the Meiji era began, Japan abandoned the era of feudal lords and samurai rule and transitioned into a modern nation-state. At that time, the state religion of Japan was established as *State Shinto*. The Shinto that the Japanese people had quietly revered and preserved in their hearts was transformed into a political religion, used to unify the people and mobilize the nation.

In earlier times, Shinto had existed in a form that was vague, diverse, and even contradictory. It was tolerant, inclusive, and quietly embedded in the people's lives. But in the Meiji era, Shinto was stripped of this quiet tolerance and reshaped into a rigid, formalized system with political purposes. The emperor was placed at its center, and it was tied to nationalism, militarism, and even war.

Thus, we can say that Shinto had two sides. On the one hand, there was Shinto as a folk faith, softly resonating with the Japanese people's hearts, encouraging harmony and reverence for the unseen. On the other hand, there was Shinto as a state-controlled ideology, used to command the people and justify wars.

I am not satisfied with the translation below by ChatGPT, yet this may be an example for his AI's works. Usually, his AI does excellent job. Yet he sometimes goes beyond the entrusted job of translation. Anybody who use

both Japanese and English can see it. He made it condensed and concise verry well. His language skill is astonishing. But I feel as if I were not the author.

Masaaki Sasaki

Shinto in the Japanese Heart

Originally, Shinto was not a systematic religion with doctrines and scriptures. It was a way of sensing and revering the unseen and untouchable presence of the divine. It was gratitude for being given life, expressed in festivals, rituals, and everyday practices. This was the "Shinto in the Japanese heart."

But in the course of history, that Shinto was politicized. The quiet reverence of the people was overshadowed by a Shinto that was manipulated as an instrument of power.

The Two Aspects

History shows us both aspects:

- Shinto as the natural expression of the Japanese people's spirituality, rooted in reverence for the invisible and in the pursuit of harmony.
- Shinto as an ideology used by the state to control, mobilize, and lead the nation into war.

The former remains alive in the hearts of the Japanese, even today. The latter, having been exposed in history, should never be repeated.

For us Christians, this offers a lesson. We must distinguish between genuine faith that arises from the heart and the misuse of faith when it is turned into ideology or political power.